

Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee  
Western Kentucky University

Report to the University Senate

Date: November 24, 2014

From: Dr. Patricia Minter, Chair

The Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee met on November 18, 2014 and submits the following agenda item for consideration to the University Senate:

1. Approval of the Proposed Online Field Trip Authorization Form:  
<https://asaweb.wku.edu/php/test/wkuforms/source/WKUFormsCreateInst.php?form=FieldTripAuth>

The Committee, however, expressed its continued reservations with the university's protection of its employees from liability while on field trips with students. Some concerns included reasonableness of timeline (creating an exception to the fourteen day timeline for last-minute field trips or other situations which involve immediacy; other exigency policy that allows for reasonable exceptions). The Committee also agreed that we would continue to seek greater coverage for professional liability insurance, consistent with the University Senate resolution passed in 2005 and accepted by former Provost Burch:

*"Whereas currently University employees are frequently required to travel as part of their employment, Whereas faculty often lead field trips and study abroad trips outside of the University Campus, Whereas currently employees are not covered or inadequately covered by the University either personally or professionally in the case of lawsuits for off campus events and thus are potentially exposed to excessive financial loss,*

*And whereas the University as an organization can purchase such insurance in the most cost effective manner,*

*The University Senate resolves that professional liability insurance or its equivalent should be provided to all faculty and staff whose activities require them to travel off campus as part of their employment. This policy should provide coverage of at least 3 million dollars per incident and the maximum should increase to keep pace with inflation and typical liability judgments."*

The FWPR Committee also agreed to take up several agenda items going forward, although we welcome additional input from the faculty on possible areas of inquiry:

- Title IX/Clery Act Compliance: Training, Effectiveness, Advocacy?
- Benefits Concern: Current self-insurance plans may represent a de facto compensation reduction
- Compensation Concerns (on which we wish to partner with Senate Finance/Budget Committee)
- Faculty Handbook issues
- Instructor ranks (tabled from last year's Senate; will ultimately need to go to Handbook if action is taken by FWPR)